

The Delta Farmers Advocating Resource Management Project

Project Description:

The Delta F.A.R.M. [Farmers Advocating Resource Management] program was initiated in 1998 to aid in the implementation of additional Best Management Practices (BMPs) in Northwest Mississippi. This comprehensive program, designed to conserve

water and reduce nonpoint source pollution from agriculture, involved the cooperative effort of local producers, sponsors and partner agencies. The program sought to conserve, restore, and enhance the environment of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta through the implementation of BMPs in agriculture. These BMPs included soil and water conservation, as well as the proper storage, handling, and disposal of pesticides, petroleum products, fertilizers, solid waste and other hazardous materials.



Goals and Objectives: The primary goal of the project was to enhance the existing environmental stewardship level of the landowners and farm operators by implementing additional conservation practices, to conserve and protect the natural resources of the region without reducing productivity or profitability. Specific objectives included: 1) enrollment of at least 400,000 acres into the Delta F.A.R.M. program; 2) demonstration of BMPs through tours of existing BMPs on Delta F.A.R.M. members' lands; 3) assist landowners with the implementation of new BMPs; and 4)

provide information to landowners on BMP installation, Federal cost-sharing programs, and regulatory laws through a Program Manual and newsletter.



Results: During the project period, the objective to enroll at least 400,000 acres in the program was exceeded with a total enrollment of 633,123 acres of land (24.3% of total cropland) in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta region. Of these acres, all were evaluated and monitored annually to document BMPs established through the program; installed BMPs increase from 82% to 85%. Technical assistance was provided and landowners were given information on Federal Conservation Programs and cost sharing opportunities. In many cases,

landowners used these programs to implement projects and install BMPs. In other cases, the Delta F.A.R.M. program developed BMP implementation projects. The program also

provided cost sharing opportunities to the landowner for closing wells, planting grass filter strips and installing sediment retention devices.



Educational components of the project included demonstration farm field days and tours, the Program Manual, Delta Steward newsletter, public presentations, and the Delta F.A.R.M. website (www.deltafarm.org). Tours and field days highlighted BMPs that can be cost shared through the USDA Conservation Programs and other practices that landowners regularly implement on a voluntary basis. Delta F.A.R.M. conducted several field day tours on production farms across the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta to highlight various installed BMPs and educate the participants on environmental benefits, cost of implementation, and cost sharing opportunities. The field days were also used to inform participants of the role and activities of the Delta F.A.R.M. program. Field days were developed for farmers, local agencies, the general public and the media. Tours for farmers focused on the application, installation, and economics of BMPs. Tours for the general public, natural resource agencies, and conservation organizations highlighted the environmental benefits of the BMPs voluntarily implemented on production farms. Tours for the media showcased farmers using BMPs to address specific resource or economic concerns.

All landowners and farmers that enrolled land in the program received a Program Manual. The manual contained extensive information on BMP implementation and regulatory laws. Members also received a quarterly newsletter entitled the "Delta Steward" that provided members with up-to-date information on conservation practices, cost-sharing opportunities, and regulatory laws. Public education was accomplished through regular press releases, public presentations and the Delta F.A.R.M. website.

Lead Agencies: The B. F. Smith Foundation, Delta F.A.R.M. Program

Funding: EPA: \$97,292 **Matching:** \$68,685

Project Dates: 05/25/2000 to 06/30/2003

Project Location: MS, Yazoo River Basin

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[Delta F.A.R.M. Final Report](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/local/region4/ag/deltafarmreport.pdf)
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